



Concurrent Enrollment Podcast-Recorded April 2022

Intro

Welcome to PDO podcasts, sponsored by the Early Childhood Education Professional Development Organization at PASSHE. Here, we explore news and views about exciting opportunities in early childhood education, and how those who teach our youngest children can build rewarding careers.

Liz Knouse, ECEPDO Director

Welcome to the ECEPDO podcast for April. This month, we thought we would feature our latest pilot project. Since graduation is just around the corner for high schools and colleges, this is a perfect opportunity to discuss our pilot project that we have with area high schoolers.

Sometimes we know from a young age what career we'd like to pursue; sometimes we don't have any earthly idea until we're already in the workplace. Now with this partnership from the ECEPDO at PASSHE, high schoolers can do more than just think about what career they might like to pursue. They can actually begin professional development through what's called our Concurrent Enrollment Program and earn college credits at the same time. It may sound a little complicated, but we're going to get to that.

Simply speaking, the ECEPDO project partners with area high school students that are juniors and seniors who are interested in a career in early childhood. These students complete their high school education, while at the same time taking college-level coursework that can be transferred to a CDA (Child Development Associate credential), an Associate's degree, and even a Bachelor's degree at Shippensburg University. There is no cost to the high schooler who participates in the Concurrent Enrollment Program. Aside from the time invested in studying to advance their career, this project is free.

I'm Liz Knouse, director of the ECEPDO at PASSHE. I'm joined today by Mr. Joshua Campbell, who is a cooperative education supervisor for Eastern York High School, as well as Isabella, a senior at Eastern York High School. We're so pleased that Isabella is participating in this ECEPDO Concurrent Enrollment Program and advancing her career in early childhood education at such an early start. We're excited to learn your thoughts about this great opportunity so that you may share it with some of our potential students. Welcome, Mr. Campbell and Isabella, and thank you for joining us.

Bella, HS Student

Thank you. We're glad to be here.

Mr. Campbell, HS Cooperative Education Supervisor

Yes, thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this with you.

Liz Knouse

Great! Mr. Campbell, can you share with us and our listeners a little bit about the ECE Concurrent Enrollment Project and how it works at Eastern York High School, and a little bit how this opportunity was introduced to your students and their parents.

Mr. Campbell

So, at East York High School, we have a department which is called Cooperative Education, which again, as you stated, is starting your career, possibly in high school or getting prepared for high school. So, this concurrent program that you're speaking of was offered to our former principal, and it was advertised to us about how those interested in education may take advantage of this.

At Eastern York High School, we have a program which is called Child Care and Development. And our students that are enrolled in there are ones which may have an interest in becoming educators in the future. So, it seems like a logical fit that some of our students may want to utilize this program where they're able to take college coursework during the school day. Bella, currently takes college coursework, and she's able to do so remotely from her own living room if she would want to in her house. We also have a second student who's enrolled, and she comes down to our Career Center and completes the coursework there, which is also then partnered up with the work that they do at a local childcare facility, as well. So, it's been extremely beneficial for students because they're able to get a jumpstart on their potential career and learn what they like and what they maybe don't like, as well. But just to take advantage of this, because as you mentioned before, and probably will mention, again, they're able to kind of take this as a jumpstart to potentially earning an Associate's degree or a Bachelor's degree. And it's just been a great program for our students to take advantage of.

Liz Knouse

Thank you. That's great. So, your program as cooperative education, you will help them to find employment as well or do you place them in internships and in employment should they desire?

Mr. Campbell

So, the answer to that is yes to all. Ironically, the daycare facility that Bella's currently employed at I was actually employed at when I was in college, so that's kind of ironic. But I can help them find placements as well and I can help them find future employment. So, it's not just the field of early education, we have all kinds of different entities that are involved. But to answer your question, specifically, in regard to this program, yes, it's helping them find facilities that would be appropriate for them to work at and to get their hours for the program.

Liz Knouse

Well, that's very full circle for you. It must be very fulfilling to be able to place a student in a place that you worked at before, as well. That's great. Welcome, Isabella. How did you come to have an interest in early childhood education? What prompted you to want to choose the field of early childhood education and even take these courses?

Bella

So, I normally babysit a few kids. And that's when I really got familiar with young children because I don't have any younger siblings. And teaching has always seemed like something I would like to do and be involved in. And something I'll never really want to not do. And also, it gives you the chance to make a difference in the world.

Liz Knouse

That is so true, there won't be a day you go home from work that you don't feel like you made a difference in somebody's life. There are very few careers that you can say that you can do that and early childhood education or teaching in general is certainly one of those fields. And certainly, in early childhood, there was quite a crisis level of not having qualified or having staff in at all in any of our programs. We saw during the pandemic that how vitally important childcare is to our economy. So, we are grateful to have high school students such as you make that commitment early on. And certainly, taking these courses is one way to get you to that new job as you graduate from college. It looks like you're taking two of our college courses right now. And you already took one in the fall with your high school classes. What do you think was the most profound thing that you've learned so far in taking these courses that has helped you?

Bella

So, something that I learned early on in the course is that there's like a behavior pyramid with how challenging behaviors happen. And they call it like a red arrow moment. And that is not the time to try to teach a child to do something differently, because at that moment, they aren't listening. And it could even make them want to do the behavior more, because they're getting attention from it.

Liz Knouse

I understand from speaking to you earlier that you are working in a childcare center. Do you want to talk a little bit about your experience and how classes that you're taking have had an impact or an effect on your work experiences?

Bella

So, in my first semester last fall, I didn't really have time to work at a daycare. But as soon as I started doing the courses, the spring semester, and I was also working at the daycare, everything kind of came together. And I was able to see how what I was learning was actually relevant, rather than just like I'm learning this, but I can't apply it anywhere.

Liz Knouse

That's exactly what these classes are designed to do, is to give you the how's and the why's. And really that makes so much of a difference when you're teaching, is being able to know the "why" behavior like you've just described, and the timing of when you can you have a student's attention. And that's really no matter what age group you're teaching, to learn that and so that's great that you've been able to apply that knowledge as you go into your classrooms. I'm sure your students have really benefited from your experiences in the classroom. Have you

found the classes to be very difficult to do while you're going to school at the same time as far as the level of difficulty, and then even from a time management end, different than high school courses?

Bella

So, the classes so far have not been too difficult or anything that isn't manageable. I have like my other classmate who's taking the classes that if I ever need help with anything, she's there for me. Mr. Campbell is a great help. And then my teachers are always available by email. So, any question I have can be answered. And something that I've learned through the pandemic is that time management is important, especially when you're learning virtually, because you need the motivation to open up your computer, even though you're not going to school or anything like that.

Liz Knouse

You mentioned something that caught my attention - learning virtually. And when we put these courses together as a pilot, especially for the high school level, we were concerned that you know, having just coming off the pandemic, or coming out of the pandemic, when students were probably and I know this was a shock, we're thrilled to be in person as opposed to being online. So, I know that we were worried that going to a virtual course would be difficult for our students to be able to even feel motivated. Like you said, we plan to do some of them in person and doing some hybrid models, and in doing them as interactive. Did you find this course to be interactive, even though it was online?

Bella

So, we do actually have a lot of like discussion posts that we participated and respond to our peers. So that's really helpful, even though you might not really know who they are or who you're talking to, you can still have meaningful discussions with them.

Liz Knouse

Good, good. That's good to know. The University of Washington has created a lot of the coursework that we're utilizing through Shippensburg University. And so, what's great about those is they were designed with a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. So, they knew a little bit of something about Microsoft. And they knew a little bit of something about putting together some videos. And so, the videos I think really do help you apply what you're doing, especially since you have the access in a classroom environment and with children to be able to take what you're doing with those videos and either upload your own or watch videos that have a relationship to what you're learning. And at first, I was worried about that and wasn't sure how relevant that would be. But it sounds like to me you're finding those very relevant and a good experience for you.

Intermission

Are you an early childcare teacher who's wondering how you can advance your career at no cost or very little cost? That is exactly what the ECEPDO at PASSHE was formed to do. The first step is to apply to the PDO for tuition support, go to the ecepdo.org homepage, and hit the "get

started” button. One of our team members will reach out to you once you've applied, and we'll help you enroll with a participating educational partner that best suits your needs and goals. Whether you want to start with a Child Development Associate credential or advance to an Associate's or Bachelor's degree, now is the best time to expand your career in early childhood education. Visit eceptdo.org to get started and learn more. Now let's get back to today's PDO podcast.

Liz Knouse

What have you enjoyed most about learning through the courses or at least what do you think you're going to enjoy most as you embark on the last course, and then move on to your next level?

Bella

I've enjoyed doing it virtually because I can be like 100% - they're ready to learn ready to listen.

Liz Knouse

Good, good. And so, this course well, these courses give you the ability to earn a CDA or Child Development Associate credential, or you do not have to do that you may use those to be at least nine credits that help you towards your Associate's degree if you choose to use those at HACC, or another community college that we partner with in the PDO. Or they certainly go directly to Shippensburg. And so, you can go directly into the teacher education department at Shippensburg already with nine credits under your belt in the education department. So that's really great for you. What are your plans after high school graduation?

Bella

So, after I graduate high school, I plan to attend Millersville University for a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education.

Liz Knouse

So, Millersville is looking forward to having you. We also partner with Millersville University. And I had learned earlier this week that's where you're headed. I should have said that earlier. And we mentioned that you had taken our courses to go to one of our partner schools at Millersville. And so, they're very excited to have you there in joining them, as well. You seem like a very, very busy student with a job. And it sounds like you told me you were working with three- and four-year-olds in the classroom? And what is your job, specifically, when you go there? Do you read to the students? Do you do activities with them? Do you do outdoor time?

Bella

So, the students love to read books together. They always just run to the shelf and hand me book after book. Sometimes, I'm reading for like hours there. And then I get to help out with whatever crafts they're working on. And I also get time to just sit and observe what's going on with the room.

Liz Knouse

So, can you tell me if you had to give advice to a future student, because what we're hoping to do is broaden this pilot to across the state of Pennsylvania that the PDO covers. We cover about four regions or 62 counties of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania. And so, we have requested to expand this pilot from what we've learned, and your feedback has been super helpful in helping us to shape what this looks like for future students. So, what would you say if you were talking to a student who is interested in early childhood and taking this course, what is some advice you would give them?

Bella

I would tell them to just do this program, because you're getting not only knowledge, but you're getting credits. And then also you're able to experience what being an early childhood educator is like before you spend thousands of dollars at a college to get a degree. So, you get to really like put your feet in the water and kind of understand like what you'd be getting into.

Liz Knouse

That's great advice. Would you recommend they take one class at a time, or do you think taking two classes is overly difficult or it's just about time management?

Bella

I would say it's just about time management. They're similar in the fact that you're learning about early childhood education, but they are like two different courses. So, you kind of have your own time with each course. And I personally was not overwhelmed with the workload.

Liz Knouse

Do you have any time management techniques that you want to share, as well? I always ask everybody this question.

Bella

So, I love journaling and having my calendar and the different colored pens. I really just plan out what my to do list is for the day, and how I'm going to spend my time and when.

Liz Knouse

That's perfect. I think the journaling is a really great idea. It actually works really well with children, too. And journaling, there are your experiences in the classroom, you will go back and see what they've learned and how you've taught it, and then go back again and see what you know. It's a good way to reflect; it's a good reflection tool. Mr. Campbell, I wanted to ask you, since you do manage the Cooperative Education Program ... what would you say would be something that you would want students to know about this program?

Mr. Campbell

Before I directly answer the question, I do want to make note. Bella is like a superstar in regard to this. She's hiding a little bit of what she does well. Not only does she work at the daycare with this program, but she goes down to our elementary buildings, I think it's twice a week. And

she works in a kindergarten first grade, depending on that day setting, as well. So, she's not only working with three- and four-year olds, she's worked with five- and six-year olds, as well. So, she is a rock star, to say the least.

So, the program has been very beneficial to her. And I think she's done very, very well with that. In regard to answer your question, I just think it's a great program for students to take advantage of. Obviously, there's been some ill feelings towards COVID. But it has opened doors for us as well. The virtual learning environment showed us that we could potentially be doing education at Shippensburg without technically being at Shippensburg. And it's been allowing our students to be able to do some things that previously were un-thought-of.

So, Bella is able to get up to nine college credits without actually being on the college campus. And she's able to do that at her own pace, while also not being on her own, because she has classmates but myself and her instructor, as well, to ask those questions, too. And it's a great opportunity for the students to experience that. And as Bella mentioned, too, she's able to find out what she really truly loves. And also, just as important, maybe what she doesn't really like as well, especially with the way education is now with the certifications being so specific. I think it's unbelievably valuable to find that out prior to going into college because as Bella said, you can spend thousands of dollars trying to figure that out. Or maybe you can figure that out while you're in high school and have a pretty good direction when you do start your post-secondary career.

Liz Knouse

That is absolutely, positively true in the amount of money that you could spend before you know what you want to do. Having three children in college, I can completely relate to that, and making sure that they have an understanding of what happens afterwards. And Isabella, I can tell you that if Dr Mancuso hasn't already tried to hire you at Eastern York, I know a couple of other school districts that probably are listening to this or will be listening to this and will certainly want to hire you. It does sound like you have a good ability to manage your time well and certainly with all of your activities.

I would like to thank you both for sharing your time and thoughts with us today about the Early Childhood Education Concurrent Enrollment project and this was a pilot year and you have helped make this pilot more wildly successful. So, thank you so much for that. To learn more about how high school students in Pennsylvania can earn college credits in early childhood education at no cost, please go to our website at ecepdo.org. Thank you.

Bella

Thank you for having us here today and I am so thankful to be a part of this program.

Mr. Campbell

Thank you for having us and letting us share our experience, and we look forward to continuing the partnership.

Liz Knouse

Good luck to you.

Conclusion

That's a wrap for this issue of PDO podcast. Tune into more PDO podcasts wherever you access your favorites and learn more about the Early Childhood Education Professional Development Organization at PASSHE on the web at eceptdo.org. This project is supported by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning of Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services and Pennsylvania's Department of Education.

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